

**Written Testimony Supporting
Proposed House Bill 7285,
An Act Concerning Complaints That Allege Misconduct By Law Enforcement Agency Personnel**

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, representative Tong and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Theresa Woodman and I am a resident of Morris, Connecticut. I am writing to testify in support of Proposed House Bill 7285, which intends to ensure compliance with the provisions of section 7-294bb of the Connecticut general statutes concerning the acceptance, processing, and investigation of a complaint from a member of the public relating to misconduct committed by law enforcement agency personnel.

I experienced an issue with an officer less than a year ago that involved sexual assault for not coming to a full stop at a stop sign. I was not asked for my drivers license or registration after being pulled over, but was asked to get out of my car. When I did, I was forcefully pushed against my car with my arms restricted by the officer. He then rubbed against me in a sexual way, and repeatedly told me that I had "broken the law and would be arrested if I didn't do what I was told." I was horrified and thought I was going to be raped. Fortunately, the officer released me. The next day I intended to file a complaint, but was concerned if I did, the officer may find out. I didn't know how or where to file an anonymous complaint. Out of fear, nothing was reported.

Proposed HB 7285 recognizes that our police complaint process is flawed, but there is still room for it to be additionally improved. I support the intent of HB 7285, but ask the Joint Committee on Judiciary to amend this bill so that its benefits may be fully appreciated. A recent survey conducted by the ACLU Connecticut indicated that many Connecticut police agencies make it challenging for the general public to obtain basic information about complaint forms and understand the overall complaint process. I am now aware that in some areas, this lack of transparency violates State law.

In order for HB 7285 to be more effective, it must be amended to include the following:

- 1) Establish meaningful penalties for law enforcement agencies that do not comply with state acceptance and investigation laws.
- 2) Create a standard complaint form that is compliant with best practices and translated into commonly spoken languages in Connecticut
- 3) Require law enforcement agencies to track complaint data to annually report specific complaint information to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

Establishing a transparent, accessible police complaint process is necessary for creating a truly fair and just police force in Connecticut—one that community members like me can trust and depend on. Amending HB 7285 will encourage community faith in the police complaint process and ensure that we are holding our law enforcement agencies accountable.

I urge the members of this committee to amend and support HB 7285.

Theresa Woodman
Morris, Connecticut